



Winter Calendar of Events

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DECEMBER 18, 2008

New Year

Reflections Hike

Join us for a 2.5-mile, roundtrip hike and take this opportunity to reflect on the passing of the old year and the entrance of the new. **Saturday, Dec. 27 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

Sunset Hike

Explore the twilight sights and sounds of the Canyon during a two-mile, roundtrip evening hike. **Saturday, Jan. 10 4:30-6:00 p.m.**

Star Gazing Party

Join Laura Cotts, guest astronomer from SUU, for a starry evening in the Canyon! Learn about several winter constellations,

as well as stories of the night sky.

Saturday, Jan. 24 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Cinder Cone Hike

Learn about volcanoes and the volcanic activity responsible for the lava flows in the park. Hike to the top of the Snow Canyon cinder cone during this 1.5-mile, roundtrip hike. **Saturday, Feb. 7 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

Lava Tubes Tour

Join park staff for a two-mile, roundtrip hike and the chance to explore the unique formations of a lava tube! **Saturday, Feb. 21 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

Nature Sketchwalk

Join guest artist, Arlene Braithwaite, Associate Professor of Art & Design, and explore the fun of nature sketching on this 1.5-mile, roundtrip hike! **Saturday, Feb. 28 1:00-2:30 p.m.**

Birds of Prey

Up Close
Meet several birds of prey 'up close'! Join Justin Neighbor, Wildlife Rehabilitator, as he discusses these amazing birds, conservation, and falconry. Don't miss the chance to visit with a live hawk! **Saturday, Mar. 7 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

What's New!

If you haven't visited Park Headquarters lately, then you may want to stop by, see our new bookstore, and meet some new, friendly faces! Snow Canyon State Park has recently partnered with ASIA (Arizona Strip Interpretive Association),

whose volunteers will be managing the new bookstore, as well as helping to keep our main office available to park visitors 8 to 5 every day! Snow Canyon State Park is excited about this new partnership

and looks forward to an exciting year ahead! The bookstore offers publications on the natural and cultural history of the area and is a great stop for learning more about Snow Canyon!

All listed events are free and open to the public. Program registration is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the two days proceeding the scheduled event. Please register by phone or in person. For more information or to register for a program contact park staff at (435)628-2255.

Did You Know:

...the name "coyote" comes from the Aztec word *coyotl*.

...when coyotes are about two years old, they select a mate and stay with that mate for life.

...coyote parents may supply live mice to their pups for hunting practice.

Snow Canyon State Park

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Utah State Parks:

Providing opportunities to enhance the quality of life by preserving natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

'Song Dogs' of the Desert

For many, a night in the desert is incomplete without the mournful song of the coyote. Called 'Song Dog' in some Native American cultures, the howling, yipping and choral singing of coyotes is a familiar sound. The coyote's scientific name, *canis latrans*, means "barking dog" and refers to their diverse vocabulary of barks, growls, and howls. Possessing a range of notes so varied, just two coyotes howling may sound like half a dozen!

More likely to be heard than seen, this desert survivor hunts by night and covers a lot of ground. A speedster, coyotes can lope as fast as 25 to 30 miles an hour and can sprint up to 40! Chiefly nocturnal, they may travel several hundred miles in a single night.

A true scavenger, the coyote will eat almost anything animal or vegetable. Although its diet consists predominantly of small rodents and rabbits, a 'typical' diet may contain up to 40% plant material. In hard times, their diet can also include carrion, insects, mesquite pods and dry



grass. Coyotes are a valuable check on rodents—often killing sick mice and rats.

Found in nearly every habitat in North America, Coyotes are intelligent animals—able to adapt their behavior and diet to most situations. To survive the Southwest's extremes, 'Desert' coyotes weigh about half as much (20 pounds versus 40 to 45) as other coyotes. Also, with shorter, thinner fur, they are able to dispel excess heat more easily. Paler coloring allows them to absorb less heat and blend more easily into light-colored desert landscapes.

Today, desert coyotes trot among the cholla and sage, along the same worn paths they have traveled for centuries. Next time you are enjoying a starry desert night and a coyote 'choir' begins their haunting lyrics, consider that maybe the eerie yelps and howls are a tribute to the 'Song Dogs' endurance.



*Coyote track in the snow, 2008
by Maria Werner*